

Ford holds 2nd Women's Council session

TROY, Mich. — Women representing 13 leading farm organizations attended Ford Tractor Operations' second annual National Agricultural Women's Council meeting at Ford Tractor's North American Training Center in Memphis, Tenn., June 26-28.

Council sessions included roundtable discussions on major marketing, advertising, financing, product and dealer-service issues; meetings with Ford Tractor's top management; a "ride-and-drive" session on Ford's 160-acre farm in Collierville with newly introduced agricultural and consumer products, and a tour of Ford Tractor facilities in the area.

"The council is an important communications link between Ford and the women in agriculture," said Robert J. Nicolazzi, general operations manager of Ford Tractor's North American Sales Operations. "Through these council meetings, we can explore the needs of women

in agriculture so Ford can better serve this important group. We also gain valuable information and receive feedback from the users of tractors and implements which we incorporate into plans for future programs."

After listening to the members at the first Women's Council meeting last October in Troy, Mich., Ford marketing planners incorporated a number of ideas into their 1984 North American dealer meetings and advertising program.

"At our six regional dealer meetings, we re-emphasized the important role women play in parts purchasing and the demand for quality service," Mr. Nicolazzi said. "We also produced our first advertisement featuring women as key partners in the farming operation, appearing in publications and newspapers throughout North America this summer."

Council members also explained how they play a key role in farm

finances. To enhance these efforts, Ford Tractor established an in-depth seminar dealing specifically with farm finances. The seminar has been presented to farm women at the national convention of Women Involved in Farm Economics and at the "Workshop for Women in Agriculture," sponsored by Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Mich.

It is scheduled for presentation at the national conventions of the American Soybean Association in Tulsa, Okla. on August 3, and to the American Agri-Women Association in Peoria, Ill. on November 15.

According to United States Department of Agriculture statistics, more than 60 percent of the nation's farm wives are responsible for their farm's finances and budgeting; 58 percent share land purchase decisions and 55 percent are considered to be one

of their farm's main operators. Mr. John Churchman, marketing manager of Ford Tractor's North American Sales Operations, said Ford Tractor is conducting additional research on the involvement of women on the farm, especially regarding purchase decisions on tractors and farm equipment.

The Ford Council members represent North American farm organizations with up to three million members and are active leaders in their communities. Some are prominent national and state spokespersons for their organizations. All of the women are full partners with their husbands in farming operations with up to 3,000 acres. Several council members write for agricultural magazines and community or daily newspapers.

Council members were selected by the governing bodies of leading

agricultural groups. They represent Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE); American Agri-Women (AAW); American Farm Bureau Federation; National Farmers Organization; National Farmers Union, Canadian Federation of Agriculture; American Soybean Association; National Association of Wheat Growers; National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Inc.; National Grange Association; National Corn Growers Association; National Cotton Council of America, and American Agriculture Movement. Women representatives from the Agricultural Departments of Michigan State University and the University of Florida also attended the council meeting.

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